

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 INR-07 L-03 ACDA-12
NSAE-00 PA-01 SS-15 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-06 TRSE-00
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SECDEF WASHDC
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USNAHALO PARIS
USNMR SHAPE BE
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 10175

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MPOL, NATO, BE
SUBJECT: BELGIAN HAWK

REF: (A) BRUSSELS 11790 (DTG 131739Z SEP 77),
(B) USNATO 9292 (DTG 281604Z SEP 77), (C) USNATO 9153
(DTG 241312Z SEP 77), (D) USNATO 9128 (DTG 231702Z
SEP 77), (E) USNAHALO 30167 (DTG 141600Z OCT 77)

1. DESPITE MOD VANDEN BOEYNANTS' PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT ON
SEPTEMBER 13 THAT HE HAD DECIDED TO PROCEED WITH THE MOD-
ERNIZATION OF HAWK (REF A), BELGIAN AUTHORITIES STATE
THAT RESOLUTION OF THE HAWK ISSUE STILL AWAITS A FORMAL
CABINET DECISION (REFS B-D).

2. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT IS DRAWING
NEAR TO A FORMAL DECISION ON UPGRADING HAWK, BUT THAT
VANDEN BOEYNANTS IS HAVING SOME DIFFICULTY IN PRESENTING
HIS CABINET COLLEAGUES WITH A GOOD CASE ON ECONOMIC
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GROUND. BELGIUM HAS RAISED THE INDUSTRIAL OFFSET ISSUE
BOTH WITH THE AMBASSADOR (REF B) AND AT THE OCTOBER NATO
HAWK BOARD OF DIRECTORS' MEETING, SUPPORTED IN THE LATTER
FORUM AT LEAST VERBALLY BY THE FRENCH AND GERMANS (REF D).
HOWEVER, IN THAT THE IMPROVED HAWK PRODUCTION AND ASSEMBLY
LINES ARE WELL ESTABLISHED AND RATHER INFLEXIBLE AT THIS
POINT AND IN THAT BELGIUM IS A LATE-COMER TO THE PROGRAM,

WE DOUBT THAT MUCH, IF ANY, PRODUCTION CAN BE SHIFTED TO BELGIUM AT THIS LATE DATE.

3. IN VIEW OF THE IMPORTANCE OF RETAINING BELGIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE HAWK BELT, AND THE SUBSTANTIAL SHARE OF HAWK PRODUCTION ACCOMPLISHED IN THE US, WE BELIEVE THAT THE US SHOULD CONSIDER WAYS OF MAKING HAWK IMPROVEMENT APPEAR MORE ATTRACTIVE TO THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT. ONE IDEA THAT WE SUGGEST FOR WASHINGTON'S CONSIDERATION WOULD BE FOR THE US TO SPECIFICALLY OFFER THE GOVERNMENT OF BELGIUM TO OPEN NEGOTIATIONS ON A BILATERAL MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) ON DEFENSE COOPERATION ALONG THE LINES OF THE US-UK MOU. THOUGH THERE WOULD BE NO NEAR-TERM IMPACT FROM SUCH AN AGREEMENT, AND THOUGH ITS RELATION TO HAWK WOULD APPEAR TENUOUS, IT MIGHT PROVIDE A "POLITICAL FIG LEAF" OR "CARROT" FOR VANDEN BOEYNANTS TO USE IN EASING HAWK PAST HIS CABINET COLLEAGUES. GLITMAN

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